

Division of Extension Information  
 Extension Service, U.S.D.A.  
 Washington 25, D. C.

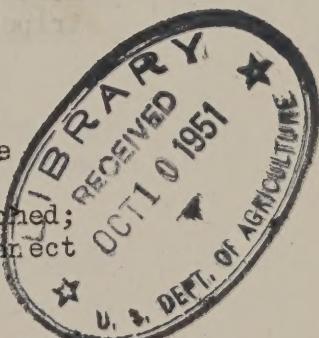
August 1951

Suggestions for the Various Steps Involved  
 in Planning, Organizing, and Effectuating a  
 National or Regional Extension Information Program

by  
 Lester A. Schlup, Chief  
 Division of Extension Information

A successful national or regional Extension information program must take into consideration policy, subject matter, economic background, the psychology of interpretation, public communication media, public relations, inter- and intra-agency relations, spot checking, and similar factors. It should, therefore, be a joint effort of administrative officers, supervisors, subject matter and economic specialists, information specialists, specialists in training methods, and the like . . . the concerted, cooperative, and coordinated action of all members of the Cooperative Extension Service staff (Federal, State, and county) is necessary to focus such a program (properly adapted to fit local situations) squarely on the objectives. . . . The following steps in planning and effectuating such an information program are suggestive. The steps outlined are not necessarily consecutive. They may overlap in certain places, and some of the procedures suggested to attain specific objectives could possibly be done earlier in the process than the place given to them in the outline. The main point is to do the things necessary to carry forward, in a coordinated way, the thinking of all persons who have a part to play in the program.

1. Conception. Identification of problem area that needs remedial action through intelligent application of all available facts and concentration of energies of all available forces on a solution.
2. Steering committee. Representing various divisions of the Service appointed by the Director of Extension Work, after administrative consideration and approval. Steering Committee to be responsible for general guidance on policy and subject-matter aspects of the program.
3. Preliminary planning. Tentative consideration of-
  - a. Objectives--problems--what are we seeking to do?
  - b. What should be the key points of the program?
  - c. How is program related to other programs--how can it be coordinated with broad objectives?
  - d. Appraisal of the particular kind of audience to be reached; its problems, and the specialized appeals needed to connect its problems and interests with the program.
  - e. Timing.
  - f. Meetings needed that would contribute to the program's success (instruction, training, cooperating agency coordination, public relations).



- g. Types of materials needed.
- h. Kinds of communication methods to be utilized.
- i. Public relations angles involved.
- j. What priority should be given to this program in relation to other programs to be emphasized?
- k. Designation of program information leader. (Steering committee chairman is usually the program administrative and broad policy leader.)

4. Analysis (fact finding and getting the background upon which to base the final program).

- a. Consult--

- Policy makers on policy angles.
- Administrative heads of cooperating agencies concerned.
- Subject-matter specialists on subject-matter angles.
- Economic specialists on economic implications.
- State extension directors and staff who are familiar with practical implications of the program in relation to rural psychology, experience with people, problems to be faced, cultural patterns, etc.
- Printed or mimeographed reports and analyses.
- Statistics.
- Publications on various phases of the subject.

5. Synthesis (sifting, selecting, consolidating, and pointing up in outline form the facts to be used as the basis for the program).

6. Organizing the program (tentative draft for final clearance of co-operating parties). At this point the program should be fairly complete as to a problem situation statement, long-time and short-time objectives, and methods of reaching them.

7. Administrative policy approval by the Director of Extension Work and (if it is a broad USDA or Federal Government program requiring secretarial approval) by the Secretary or Under Secretary.

8. Laying the groundwork for cooperative and concerted support, through meetings, individual conferences, correspondence, house organs, field trips, etc., with--

- (a) USDA Extension staff.
- (b) USDA bureaus and agencies.
- (c) State extension directors and staff.
- (d) Outside organizations and groups interested in cooperating and in producing their own materials to support the program.

9. Production of materials.

- a. Guiding and orientation materials for key people--governmental and cooperating nongovernmental (usually fact sheets and publications).
- b. Training materials for staff members in the States. (Fact sheets, publications, Extension house organs, slidefilms, etc.)
- c. Suggestive ideas and sample materials for adaptation and production by State and county extension offices. (Publications, fill-in news stories, radio scripts, circular letters, etc.)
- d. Popular materials for local-leader and farmer understanding when feasible, complete for distribution by State and county extension workers. (Publications, posters, motion pictures, exhibits, etc.)
- e. Discussion materials, if feasible.

10. Action.

- a. Instruction as to content of program.
- b. Training as to educational and information methods best adapted to purposes of program.
- c. Conferences with other cooperating groups to rally interest and action.
- d. Dissemination of facts bearing on the program through public communication media--press, radio, organizations, groups, etc. (Federal, State, and county).

11. Follow-up and adjustments found to be necessary as program gets under way.

12. Survey sampling and evaluation.

- a. Pre-survey to determine farmers' knowledge of the information upon which the program concentrates, to be used as a bench mark from which to measure results.
- b. Progress survey to determine current effectiveness of the program and the adjustments needed in content or method to keep the program in gear with current needs.
- c. Final survey to determine how effective the program has been in reaching people and influencing their actions.
- d. Report on evaluation of program.

12. Reporting progress.

- a. Local.
- b. State.
- c. National.
  - (1) Public reporting via news, magazines, radio, etc.
  - (2) Inside reporting, via letters, house organs, publications, etc., to--
    - (a) Federal, State, and county extension staff.
    - (b) USDA administrators and cooperating agencies.
    - (c) Cooperating organizations.
    - (d) Annual report to Congress.